



JOSEPH P. RILEY, JR.
MAYOR

City of Charleston
South Carolina

BARBARA W. VAUGHN
DIRECTOR
PUBLIC INFORMATION

FOR RELEASE: September 20, 2007

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., announced today the City's receipt of four citations from the South Carolina Office of Occupational Safety and Health (SC OSHA) for the June 18, 2007 fire at the Sofa Super Store at 1807 Savannah Highway. Mayor Riley stated that the City has implemented policy changes that are now in effect addressing all areas covered in the citations. Mayor Riley said, "As I stated Tuesday, the City of Charleston and the Charleston Fire Department is committed to implementing enhancements that will make the City of Charleston a national and international leader. This department will be a model of how to respond to a tragic event." Nineteen of the first 27 recommendations of the City's Post Incident Assessment and Enhancement Review Team have already been implemented, Mayor Riley stated, and the remaining policies will be implemented shortly. The City will address further recommendations from the Fire Review Team when their final report is issued.

Mayor Riley stated that the City was still seeking a greater understanding of the citations and the supporting facts behind them. Upon being contacted by City officials this afternoon, SC OSHA officials would only briefly discuss the details of the citations. SC OSHA did not conduct a closing conference with the City, contrary to their normal operational procedure.

The City received the citations this afternoon. We must work to clarify what the City feels are incorrect conclusions drawn by SC OSHA.

Mayor Riley said, "It is important that the City do all we can to set the record straight when citations in the SC OSHA report are incorrect. Specifically, to say our incident command system **willfully** does not provide for the overall safety of our personnel is contrary to everything our City and our Public Safety Departments represent. It is also important to point out that although one SC OSHA citation cites 9 firefighters for not wearing personal protective equipment, SC OSHA officials did clarify that this citation is not referring to the 9 firefighters who lost their lives in the tragic event."

The City's Corporation Counsel earlier today requested a conference with SC OSHA to discuss the citations and seek clarification for its findings. This meeting has been requested at the earliest opportunity. (Letter attached.)

The City remains determined to learn all that we can from the fire of June 18, 2007. Our Fire Review Team is working very hard and is moving forward on making an excellent fire department even better.

FOR MORE INFO:

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